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Reading Philosophy Critically: Agentive Classroom Enactment

Lynne Isham (King's College London) & Constant Leung (King's College London)

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine a specific Critical Thinking based construct of 'reading' in the context of an Advanced Level (A Level) Philosophy and Ethics class for students of 17 years of age. Critical Thinking in this study consists of a cross-curricular scheme for thinking (see next section for elaboration). Drawing on Street's (1984) ideological model of literacy, we explore the reading events presented here with reference to A Level (equivalent of matriculation in England) curriculum specifications, institutional demands, teacher and student expectations, and the role of Critical Thinking as an institutionally performed ideology rather than as a decontextualized phenomenon. As a result of the insights gained from this study, we raise questions and suggest ways in which Street's ideological model might be further elaborated to examine literacy practices in contemporary classrooms where disciplinary content, institutional goals and educational policies are mediated by teachers' and students' agentive conduct, enacted through interactional talk, in the classroom.

The data presented in this chapter comes from a classroom-based study in a multi-cultural urban comprehensive secondary school in West London for students aged 11-18. The focus in this chapter is specifically on reading events surrounding students' engagement with an extract from a philosophy textbook in an A Level Philosophy lesson. A Levels in the English education system are the examinations taken at the age of 18 and are the main qualifications through which students secure entry into university. They constitute a narrowing and deepening of disciplinary content and skills from the broader based General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) taken at the age of 16. The A Level, therefore, represents a shift for students who are required to engage with content of greater conceptual complexity, and respond to increased academic literacy demands in terms of texts to be engaged with and the nature of written outcomes expected. Such demands have been further reinforced by A Level reform which has been underway in England since September 2015. As such, study at A Level could be understood as the 'apprenticeship' into the discipline (Andrews and Mitchell, 2001).

Critical Thinking in a Philosophy Lesson

Critical Thinking features in this account as the school had identified it as a potential means of addressing issues arising from the transition from GCSE to A level referred to above. The teacher of Philosophy and Ethics featured in this chapter was part of a cross-curricular group of A Level teachers at the school who had been working with a particular metacognitive model of Critical Thinking, to inform their A Level teaching, succinctly encapsulated as follows,

> *' Critical Thinking is that mode of thinking – about any subject, content or problem- in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilfully analysing,*

> *assessing and reconstructing it. Critical Thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinking'* (Paul & Elder, 2006: xxiii)

A Critical Thinking based approach to teaching had been institutionally sanctioned, being devised and led by senior leaders in the school, who, over the course of eight years, had worked with teachers across all curriculum areas taught at A Level in the school. As a result, it is possible to argue that a Critical Thinking based approach had become infused into a distinctive pedagogical practice within the school, understood by teachers, and students, as 'how we teach A Level here'.

The rationale for the development of such an approach to teaching arose from a persistent issue of students from the school's highly ethnically and linguistically diverse student population not necessarily translating successful performance at GCSE into meeting the requirements for the top grades at A Level, and thus not accessing places on prestigious and competitive university courses. Perceived remedies to such lower than expected achievement included supporting students' engagement with complex content; promoting conceptual understanding; and developing the academic written genres required by the subject in the A Level examination. The Critical Thinking program was developed, therefore, with the aim of promoting an approach to classroom pedagogy with teachers that would foster amongst A Level students deeper intellectual engagement with subject content, associated academic discourse, and more adaptive dispositions towards challenge and difficulty (for a more detailed account, see Isham, 2018).

A key characteristic of these teachers' engagement with the Critical Thinking model was a tendency to draw selectively on aspects of it as deemed relevant to the specific difficulties their students had with particular elements of the A Level specifications in their subject. As a result, teachers were engaged in an ongoing process of blending aspects of the Critical Thinking model with their A Level specifications informed by their own assessment or diagnosis of the intellectual difficulties that such specifications presented their students. This will be illustrated in the example below where such a diagnosis appears to have informed our participant teacher's, Ms Andrews (pseudonym), adoption and adaptation of a Critical Thinking based approach to reading activities in her lessons.

Quite clearly this rather complex amalgam of subject content (Philosophy) and Critical Thinking teaching represents a highly situated pedagogic context with implications for literacy practice in the classroom. Street's (2001:8) formulation of the ideological model of literacy suggests that '…literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill … it is embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles'. The two conceptual components underlying this model - literacy as manifestation and reflection of epistemological diversity, and literacy as social practice - are fundamental to our analysis here.

Criticality in Philosophy

Ms Andrews identified two specific difficulties her students had in relation to the A Level requirement to 'discuss critically the ontological argument from Anselm and Descartes and the

challenges from Gaunilo and Kant', which entailed a critical evaluation of 'their strengths and weaknesses' (OCR, 2013:13). Firstly, in relation to being able to engage with the ideas critically Ms Andrews recognised the barrier presented by her students' insecure understanding of the difference between inductive and deductive or analytic forms of argument; the ontological argument being a form of the latter, as we will see presently in the data extracts. She explained prior to the lesson that, *'one of the hardest things for them is the concept of a type of argument. That's a real tricky one. For the ontological argument, they have to get what analytic means, and that it comes from the definition and so that links to the type of argument.'* Secondly, she noted that when reading was set for individual homework, it did not necessarily result in students developing a clear understanding of what they had read. It would appear that the teacher, at this time, saw reading as an 'encounter' with the print of the text that, she assumed, would lead to 'understanding'. However, her assessment of reading homework indicated that the students only managed to gain a fairly impressionistic understanding of the text they had read, rather than a secure and precise understanding of the key ideas or an argument. On this point Ms Andrews was of the view that 'o*ften, if they don't quite understand, they'll say they've got a clear idea, that "it's something to do with" whatever, and therefore they have the gist, but they can't see the specific stages of the argument*.'

The teacher had, therefore, traced poor performance in written essays and exam answers to students not necessarily understanding carefully and accurately what they had read and were unable to respond to the need for critical discussion or evaluation of such content. In this context, therefore, 'criticality' for these students and their teacher assumes two levels of meaning: firstly, it refers to a careful and accurate reading for meaning in this classroom context, in other words, students need to engage in a critical metacognitive process to ensure they understand with precision what they are reading; and secondly, it refers to the critical nature of the discussion and evaluation required by the A Level specifications as referred to above, which can only be broached if students have a clear and precise understanding of the arguments under question.

Given the teacher had identified that students tend to struggle to make sense of the text, or that they were not aware of the fact that their understanding may be partial or impressionistic, she had made a conscious decision that that such reading is best supported through activities structured in class as part of the lesson rather than set as homework. As a result, reading as a process of meaning making and meaning taking in this classroom is overt, explicitly taught, and deliberately practised. As will be shown below, reading in this lesson therefore assumes a particular nature and form due to the disciplinary demands of the A Level, which in this lesson entails understanding the ontological argument and the prerequisite knowledge of the features of a deductively valid argument. We will look at episodes from one lesson to see how the reading of a text is actualised in this classroom.

Reading Critically in a Philosophy Class

The classroom interactional talk data presented in this chapter is drawn from an ethnographically informed school based study of Critical Thinking (Isham, 2018). The first three extracts are taken from a 45 minute lesson that was at the end of a unit on ontological arguments for the existence of God. The 4th extract is from the teacher's commentary on the lesson after the lesson had taken place. In the

lesson, students worked in pairs on 'a close reading' task of an extract from a textbook on the ontological argument. Students spent 25 minutes on this reading task. This was followed by some students feeding back on their understanding of the text to the whole class.

'Close reading' is a reading strategy explored as part of the school's approach to a Critical Thinking based pedagogy. Based on the principle that 'the work of close reading consists in mindfully extracting and internalizing important meanings implicit in a text', as Paul and Elder (2008:9) outline in their account of Critical Thinking, students are required to articulate their own understanding of each sentence in a paragraph with a partner, leading to a written reformulation of the paragraph. In extract 1, the teacher gives the class her instructions on how the reading task is to be conducted. Extract 2 is part of an extended teacher-student interaction which took place during the reading activity; in the third extract one of the students reported the outcome from the reading task shared with the rest of the class; and the fourth extract is a reflection by the teacher after the lesson on how she approaches the reading of complex texts as part of her teaching. We have chosen to draw attention to these particular moments in the lesson because of our focus on the enactment of Critical Thinking in the situated participatory processes which, as Green, Castanheira and Yeager (2011:50) suggest, comprise, '*the ways of knowing, being and doing constructed in and through the actions of participants in a particular moment or across times and events in the classroom …'.*
The data extracts below illustrate the ways in which the teaching of the Philosophy content, mediated through spoken and written language and other semiotic means, was infused with Critical Thinking. We regard these as 'telling' moments (Mitchell, 1984). Our description and analysis here are largely concerned with how Critical Thinking was enacted, paying attention to participant meanings manifested in talk (Leung and Street, 2017).

Transcription key

T:	Teacher
S:	Student
( )	Non-transcribable segments of talk.
(unclear)	Uncertain transcription. Words within parentheses indicate transcriber's guess.
(( ))	Paralinguistic or non-verbal behavior
…	Brief pauses or hesitations within and between utterances
(. 4)	Numerals in parentheses mark silence, in tenths of a second.
(.)	A full stop in parentheses indicates a micro pause less than 0.1 second long.
=	Equal signs indicate that the turn continues at the next identical symbol on the next line or that there is no interval between the end of prior turn and the start of next turn.
<u>my</u> book	Underlining indicates marked stress or emphasis.
?	A question mark indicates rising intonation at turn completion.
↑	A sharp rise in intonation.
↓	A sharp fall in intonation.

Extract 1

1 T: So what I want you to do first of all, I want you to look through it,

2 look at any words you don't understand, underline them and look them up,
3 and then I want you to put the argument into your own words. Ok, so you
4 cannot use the same words, it's got to be, it's got to be like you're
5 doing a translation, ok, really, really closely wording it and looking a
6 it really carefully and putting it into your own words underneath.

The extract above reveals that reading in this context is highly constrained and determined by the teacher as indicated by the teacher's repetition 'I want you to' (ll.1&3). This is further reinforced by the teacher who clearly operationalizes the process in terms of what steps students must take and also in terms of the sequence in which these steps should occur. Through her use of the imperative (ll. 2&5) such as 'underline', 'look them [words] up', as well as interdiction (l.4) 'you cannot use the same words', within a clearly defined sequence ' first of all' (l.1), 'and then' (l.3), the teacher clearly communicates a very controlled view of reading with the teacher driving students in a particular direction. Characterizing the task as one of 'translation' aligns reading in this context with the transference of meaning from one language system to another, in this case, the language or 'voice' of the textbook to that of the student's own. The choice of adverbs such as 'closely', 'carefully', combined with the repetition of 'really' (ll.5&6) reinforces the expectation of precision in understanding as conveyed through lexical choices, a further feature of the practice of translation.

Extract 2

1 S: Miss?
2 T: Yeah
3 S: you see this part here, it talks about God is (unclear)
4 deductive so is it saying that reason… by reasoning we should just
5 (follow) it?
6 T: so what they're saying is, if they accept the premises as true,
7 the conclusion follows necessarily. (.6) what does that mean?
8 S: If it's deductive then it's=
9 T:= yeah but what ...what's the premises mean?
10 S: What you're trying to say
11 T: What do you mean by what you're trying to say?
12 S: What it's trying to state, like, sentences
13 T: Yeah, sentences, so it's a stage in the argument so a premise
14 ...premise is a sta... so if that premise is true then it leads
15 to that premise then it leads to that premise you're going to
16 get(.) the conclusion.
17 S: So this sentence has to be true (.2)
18 T: No↑ but...the argument, yeah, in other words if we accept the
19 premises, as in a bachelor means an unmarried man, then if you say
20 that D is a bachelor, it means he must be =
21 S: You don't really need a conclusion?
22 T: No, you don't, so that...that's the whole point, because it's
23 contained within the word.
24 S: So you don't need a conclusion↓

In this extract we see a student initiating an interaction with the teacher as she, the student, engages in the process of trying to make sense of the text and its articulation of the ontological argument which begins as follows (see appendix for the full paragraph),

Ontological arguments for God's existence are supposed to be deductively valid. In other words, if we accept their premises as true, the conclusion is said to follow necessarily.

That the student accepts and engages with the reading process as laid down by the teacher is indicated through her initiation of the interaction with the teacher (l. 1&3) in which she tests out her yet unrefined understanding of what is meant by a deductively valid argument, 'so are they saying that…by reasoning we should just follow it?' (ll. 4-5). In response, the teacher's questioning serves to probe the student's seemingly imprecise understanding of the role of a premise in a deductively valid argument (ll.9, 11). However, there appears to be a shift taking place in lines 17-24 with a reversal of roles in the initiation-response structure, indicating a development in the student's understanding. Whereas the student's imprecise explanation of 'premise' in lines 10 and 12 could be said to be indicative of impressionistic understanding, the teacher's feedback in lines 13-16 elaborates on the relationship between premises and conclusion in a deductively valid argument. At this point (l.17) the student resumes the role of initiation with a question to check her understanding of what the teacher has said, and this is continued in line 21. The student's question in line 21 suggests she is starting to see the connection between premises and a logically necessary conclusion arising from the premises. The student's intonation in line 24 suggests a statement of confirmation rather than a question, indicating a possible shift in her understanding.

A key point to be made here is that the student appears to be scaffolded through interactional talk into a specific understanding of the text by the teacher through a series of guiding and illustrating statements (Alexander 2004), and, in so doing, both the teacher and the student are also participating in a co-construction of what it means 'to read' in the context of this classroom event. The student appears to accept her role as laid out by her teacher's instruction and takes responsibility for working out meaning for herself as indicated by her use of the teacher to test out her understanding (ll. 3-5; 17, 21, 24). Conversely, the teacher reinforces her expectation that reading in this context means students engaging closely with the text by refraining from 'telling' students the meaning directly, but through facilitative questioning to probe and disinter imprecise understanding.

Extract 3.

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1 S: ((Reads from her notes taken from the reading task)).
2 Ontological arguments for God only have one logically
3 necessary conclusion. The argument that God (.3) if we accept
4 the propositions presented in the argument then there can only be
5 one conclusion, that God exists. If the argument is successful
6 then it allows us humans to know that God does (unclear) really
7 exist but before the argument can be successful we have to make
8 sure that the propositions of the argument are true. The
9 Ontological argument claims that their premises are unattackable as
10 they only care about the definitions and the concept of
11 God. Because they look closely at the concept of God and
12 not evidence from the world, they think that it is a good starting
13 point. ((Student looks up)) And that's where I got to.
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A student was asked to read out to the class the written paragraph she had constructed with her partner on the close reading of the text. There appear to be three main moves being made by the student through her reading which could be indicative of gaining a deeper understanding of complex content. The first two consist of: the transformation of the original text into simpler

syntactical structures whilst appearing to retain the essential meaning thus indicating the student's ability to reformulate meaning; and the contextualization of abstract terms from the field of deductive argument in relation to the specific argument under study, that is the ontological argument for the existence of God. These two features are illustrated succinctly by the students' rendition of the text's original line,
'In other words, if we accept their premises as true, the conclusion is said to follow necessarily.'
In lines 3-5 of extract 3, the student transfers the complex idea of a necessarily logical conclusion from the passive voice to an agentive 'if we … then …' structure in the active voice. Furthermore, her addition of 'then' and 'only be one' (ll.4-5) indicates an understanding of the relationship between the premises and the logically necessary conclusion. In addition, the student frames the general concept of 'conclusion 'in the context of the specific ontological argument under study.

A third move is the use of synonyms or synonymous phrases indicating student understanding of possibly unfamiliar terms. However, this also revealed how students may 'mis-read' the syntactical subtleties of the original text and bring to the fore how misunderstandings can occur. This is illustrated through the student's rendition of the original text,
' But ontological arguments also claim their premises are unassailable since they concern only definitions and the analysis of concepts, and specifically the analysis of God'
The student's version is shown in lines 9-11 in extract 3 above where she uses a synonym for 'unassailable' which she had checked on an online dictionary in the lesson. However, there is a possible misunderstanding of which noun the personal pronoun 'they' is referring to: in the text it refers to premises, in the student's work it refer to 'ontological arguments' and so the meaning is not quite clear. 'They only care about' is not quite an accurate synonym in this context for 'concern'. Nevertheless, what the student outcome shows is an engagement with the nature of the reading task as laid down by the teacher, and a willingness to exert a high degree of intellectual effort in order to attempt to make sense of a dense and conceptually complex text.

Extract 4

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1 T: …in the past I might have skipped over that but then now, probably
2 how my teaching has changed now, I take a tiny, tiny bit and take ages on
3 it is probably better than a lot of ...than spending longer on something
4 and also getting them to decipher it, the fact that they've had to work
5 it out and hopefully that means they will remember it better than a
6 simple text or when they look at a simpler text, which they will, it
7 should make it easier.
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In this extract, the teacher makes explicit her conscious decision to bring 'close reading' of complex texts as she has operationalized it into her classroom practice; and that it is underpinned by a conceptualization of reading such texts as an intellectual process of 'deciphering' (l.4) and 'working out' meaning (ll. 4-5). A practical pedagogical point highlighted, however, is that the class was given almost 25 minutes to make sense of a paragraph of seven sentences. The dilemma this presents teachers in terms of 'coverage' of content at the expense of securing depth of understanding is indicated here whereby the teacher makes an explicit

choice to spend time on strategies such as close reading to ensure students' secure understanding. The consequence of such an approach appears to take on a clear metacognitive dimension by 'slowing down' the reading process, literally. In this way, students interrogate the meaning of each line, externalize an inner conversation they might have about its meaning by sharing and shaping their understanding with their partner, and then consolidating that understanding by making a written record of 'their' understanding of the line, as revealed above in extracts 2 and 3. The illustrative example of interactions generated by the close reading task in extract 2 appears to indicate how the task opens up, or at least begins to open up, meaning for the students involved.

A further observation to be made is the multi-modality dimension of this ostensibly reading task which involves individual reading of the text, sharing ideas orally in pairs about its meaning along with a written record of the pair's 'translation'. It would appear that students, by having to articulate that understanding, discuss it, test it through their interaction with the teacher or their peer, and then to write it, are engaged in the process of developing an understanding of the complex ideas of the text which are directly linked to the requirements of the A Level course, and therefore moving towards 'making it their own'. As such, the enactment of reading was integrated into the flow of classroom interactions that comprised a great deal of talk.

Discussion

We would suggest the account of reading presented in this chapter instantiates Street's (1984) ideological view of literacy and notably its iteration in an educational institutional context in the form of Academic Literacies (Street, 1996) in several ways. Reading in this lesson was part of a very particular and distinctive classroom practice shaped by epistemological issues from the discipline alongside the wider institutional concerns of raising achievement, given the role of the A Level as gatekeeper to university entrance. However, we would also suggest that this account might also raise some questions and indicate ways in which Street's original ideological model may be further expanded upon for contemporary classrooms; to incorporate more explicit foregrounding of the role of individual agency in terms of literacy practices; and to explore further the role of talk as integral to the practices of reading and writing. These ideas will now be examined further.

Reading in the context of this A Level classroom appears to take the form of a very particular social practice (Street, 1984) that, although clearly directed and determined by the teacher, appears to be readily accepted by students who demonstrate a willingness to engage with the struggle for meaning from complex texts. Through the practice of reading presented here, students are learning explicitly how to 'take' meaning (Heath, 1982:49) from conceptually challenging texts that mark a transition from 'general' to 'advanced' study. In the furtherance of this aim, reading in the hands of this teacher is infused with some of the principles from the Critical Thinking model she has engaged with within the context of the wider institution, notably an approach in which students question and test their own understanding of what they read with each other, and with their teacher. Reading critically in this classroom assumes, therefore, a distinctive metacognitive character that involves the four modalities of reading, speaking, listening, and writing through which students 'acquire' the processes enabling them to secure their own understanding of texts.

Reading as conducted in this classroom, therefore, has a very particular use and purpose, linked to what the teacher has identified as barriers to students achieving high academic outcomes at A Level in her subject: notably their ability to secure a clear and accurate understanding of complex philosophical content to enable them to meet the requirements of critical discussion and evaluation, as stipulated in the A Level exam specifications. This is framed within a wider institutional concern for maximizing achievement amongst students at A Level. The concept of the ideological model of literacy, therefore, is not understood here in the broad sense of a set of naturalized practices within different cultures or populations as in Street's original account (1984). Rather, we would argue that the ideological dimension of the *deliberately* engendered literacy practices by the teacher presented in this paper can be traced from the institutional culture of the school and its concern with A Level outcomes for students, as referred to above, which is, in turn, informed by a wider national culture where high stakes assessments in the form of A Levels determine access to university. Reading, within this context, therefore, is understood by the teacher concerned as engaging with specific types of texts in order to develop the depth of conceptual understanding required for high-level performance in such qualifications.

That the Critical Thinking program which the teacher had engaged with was also institutionally endorsed as a means through which to address the issue of academic performance at A Level itself is a further indication of the ideological dynamic at play between wider educational culture; institutional culture; and disciplinary specific literacy practices in the classroom. Critical Thinking, itself, therefore, also assumes an ideological dimension both in terms of the rationale for its use in an institutional sense, and in a disciplinary sense, whereby its pedagogic rendering by the teacher into distinctive literacy practices is done to enable students to engage with the specific epistemological demands of the discipline as framed by the A Level exam

We would also suggest, however, that, based on the ideas from this paper, the ideological dimension of Street's model could be extended into a more situated theoretical framework to apply to contemporary classroom contexts which might be informed by questions such as: what is the institutional perception of 'reading' (or any other literacy activity)? What part does reading or writing play in terms of the institutions' functions and goals? How is a literacy activity being enacted through different disciplines? What part does spoken language play in situated literacy events? How does any additional curricular initiative such as Critical Thinking play out in specific classroom events and practices?

A further feature to explore in terms of developing Street's ideological model might be to consider the role of human agency. Up until this point, the discussion has been about ideas acting on or influencing reading and writing activities in terms of a situated contingent process. The agentive dimension of the classroom is important to take into account as although teachers and students are influenced by the classroom and educational context, their conduct is not driven by some pre-ordained script. In a study of academic literacy Paltridge, Starfield and Tardy (2016:23) suggest that 'contexts … are not objective conditions but rather (inter)subjective conditions that … are as much created by participants in their interactions with each other (and with others' texts) as by members of particular groups or communities'. (Also

see Bloome, Kalman and Seymour for a discussion on literacy events as situated emergent enactment, this volume).

Indeed, what is clear from the classroom data presented here is the agency of the teacher in terms of interpreting the act of reading in a very particular way, and student agency as illustrated through the nature of their participation in these reading events. Whereas the ideological trajectory of the reading practices in Ms Andrews' class in relation to institutional and wider cultural pressures and influences were explored above, it would not be accurate or true to say that the teacher and students are merely an instrument of such pressures. The sense of agency within such influences is still evident in the way the teacher has reflected upon the inadequacy of 'reading' set for homework; her assessment of the need to address 'reading' in a more explicit, pro-active way; her interpretation and enactment of the Critical Thinking approach to close reading and how that was orchestrated in her lesson; and her conscious decision to spend more lesson time on close reading of complex texts. Equally, student agency is demonstrated through the manner of interrogating the text (and the teacher) in the context of assuming ownership of 'meaning making' and 'meaning taking'. It is to be conjectured whether teachers of the same subject or teachers of other disciplines would interpret the reading demands of their subject, A Level and the needs of their students in the same way, and how student agentive conduct might present itself. It is such conjecture that may be a fruitful path to pursue in further research and in this way explore the role of individual agency within an ideological model of literacy as applied to contemporary classrooms.

A final development we would suggest in relation to the data presented here is to examine more closely the role of talk surrounding the instances of reading (and writing). As was referred to above, the Critical Thinking principles underpinning the reading practices adopted in this classroom engendered a multi-modality approach where talk with peers and/or the teacher as part of the process of 'meaning taking' was a significant feature. Indeed it is in these moments of interactions where the principles of the Critical Thinking approach are blended with the disciplinary focus of the text, as illustrated by instances of student questioning which served to surface, examine, and then address insecure understanding of the philosophical ideas in the text. As such, talk as part of classroom reading and writing practices presented here serves to provide a portal into the richness and complexity of such practices. We would argue that in this particular lesson talk constituted a significant part of the enactment of Critical Thinking.

We fully acknowledge that in Street's (1984) original work he examined the relationship between text and oral traditions which were grounded in ethnographic and sociolinguistic studies of how people used language in particular contexts. Talk, therefore, in this sense was a constitutive part of reading. In relation to an Academic Literacies context, spoken and written forms are used in terms of exploring issues of genre (Lea & Street, 2006) but not necessarily as part of the process around reading itself. Leung and Street (2017), amongst others, have since further developed this earlier position to engage specifically with classroom discourse data, to which this chapter also makes a contribution. Extending this focus on talk within an ideological model of literacy would continue to mark a conceptual expansion on the original work where an examination of the talk surrounding (or integral to) literacy practices in classroom contexts would contribute to further our understanding of 'the social practices

and conceptions of reading and writing', and 'how such practices are taught and how they are imparted' (Street, 1984:1).

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Appendix

Original text used for the reading task (Jones, Hayward & Cardinal, 2005, p.26).

Ontological arguments for God's existence are supposed to be deductively valid.
In other words, if we accept their premises as true, the conclusion is said to follow necessarily. Such arguments, if successful, would clearly represent an incredible achievement for human reason, for they promise to establish God's existence with absolute certainty!

However, as we saw above, before we can be certain that they succeed we need to be sure the premises used in such arguments are true. But ontological arguments also claim their premises are unassailable since they concern only definitions and the analysis of concepts, and specifically the analysis of God. Because we can examine the concept of God in a purely a priori manner it represents a firm starting point for our argument.
Thus an ontological argument should establish the existence of God with the same degree of certainty as is to be found in mathematics.